

Message Text

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OPR-01 OC-05 CCO-00 SSO-00 SY-04 SAM-01 /072 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3060

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

SECDEF WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 1797

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR MOPS MILI ET

SUBJECT: REPORTING FROM ETHIOPIA: THE MILITARY SITUATION

REF: STATE 029370

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. THIS IS THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF REPORTS WHICH WILL BE SUBMITTED ON MILITARY SITUATION IN COUNTRY WITH EMPHASIS ON EFFECT OF ERITREAN OPERATION. NEEDLESS TO SAY EPMG RESTRAINTS ON DAO (TO REMAIN WITHIN 40 KMS OF ADDIS), POLICY RESTRAINTS ON USMAAG (TO NOT CONDUCT ANY ADVISORY ACTIVITY WITH UNITS IN OR PREPARING FOR OPERATIONS), AND POLICY OF THE EPMG OF NOT DISCUSSING ERITREAN OPERATION IN DETAIL ALL SERVE TO INCREASE CHALLENGE OF GETTING VALID DATA IN THIS AREA. CONSEQUENTLY, THE TECHNIQUE WILL BE TO REPORT THE SITUATION IN SPECIFIC AREAS AS THE DATA BECOME AVAILABLE. THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES ARMY DISPOSITIONS AND EVALUATES ITS COMMAND AND CONTROL. IT DESCRIBES RECENT ARMY, AIR FORCE AND NAVY ACTIVITY IN ERITREA AND ASSESSES ARMY, AIRFORCE AND NAVY LOGISTIC SUPPORT CAPABILITIES. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

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1. ARMY DISPOSITIONS - RECENT REDPLOYMENTS HAVE RESULTED IN

THE EQUIVALENT OF SIX ADDITIONAL INFANTRY BATTALIONS BEING MOVED TO THE ERITREAN AREA, RAISING THE NUMBER OF MANEUVER BATTALIONS EMPLOYED IN THAT AREA TO 17 (INCLUDING TWO COMPANIES OF THE AIRBORNE BATTALION). THERE ARE NO TANKS IN THE ERITREAN AREA; PANHARD ARMORED CARS IN THE AREA AND ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS MOVING FROM ADDIS HAVE BEEN ERRONEOUSLY REPORTED AS TANKS. OF THE REMAINING MANEUVER BATTALIONS (17 INFANTRY, TWO TANK AND THE AIRBORNE MINUS TWO COMPANIES), 14 INFANTRY BATTALIONS AND TWO TANK BATTALIONS (EACH MINUS ONE COMPANY) ARE ORIENTED TOWARD THE SOMALI THREAT. THIS LEAVES THE EQUIVALENT OF THREE INFANTRY BATTALIONS, TWO TANK COMPANIES AND THE AIRBORNE BATTALION MINUS (IN DEBRE ZEIT) AVAILABLE IN THE ADDIS AREA FOR SECURITY/GENERAL RESERVE. THE ABILITY TO REINFORCE RAPIDLY EITHER THE ERITREAN OR SOMALI ORIENTED FORCES HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY DEPRECIATED.

2. COMMAND AND CONTROL - HISTORICALLY, COMMAND AND CONTROL AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (ADDIS) AND AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL (ASMARA) HAS BEEN EXTREMELY WEAK. A JOINT OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (JOC) HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN ASMARA BUT LITTLE IS KNOWN OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS. IT IS, HOWEVER, UNDER CONTROL OF A COMPETENT DIRECTOR. THE AIR FORCE HAD SUFFICIENT COMMAND AND CONTROL TO PASS AIRCRAFT FROM HAME AIR BASE TO AF CONTROL IN ASMARA, PRESUMABLY THROUGH THE ASMARA JOC, WHICH CONTROLLED DEPLOYMENTS OF AIRCRAFT IN OPERATIONS. THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF DIRECT AIR SUPPORT OF TROOPS DURING GROUND OPERATIONS. HOWEVER, ALIMITED COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY FOR SUCH EXISTS. THE NAVY HAS EXHIBITED NO SIGNIFICANT COMMAND AND CONTROL PROBLEMS TO DATE EXCEPT FOR GROSS LACK OF DISCIPLINE DISPLAYED IN DEFENSE ACTIVITY AROUNT NAVAL HEADQUARTERS IN ASMARA. THE EXTENT OF THEIR INTERFACE WITH THE JOC IS NOT KNOWN AT THIS TIME. THE ARMY EXHIBITED SUCH SERIOUS COMMAND AND CONTROL PROBLEMS IN ERITREA THAT THERE WAS LITTLE SUPERVISION OF INDIVIDUAL SOLDIERS UNTIL THE COMMANDER OF GROUND FORCES ARRIVED ON SCENE.

3. ARMY ACTIVITY IN ERITREA - PRIOR TO ARIVAL OF COMMANDER OF GROUND FORCES (BG GETACHEW) ON SCENE, OPERATIONS CHARACTERIZED BY LACK OF COMMAND AND CONTROL, INDIVIDUAL ACTS OF TERROR, PROMISCUOUS FIRING AND LOOTING.

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IT IS RUMORED THAT ONE UNIT WAS RELUCTANT TO FIGHT. GETACHEW CALLED MEETING OF JUNIOR OFFICERS, EXHORTED THEM TO RESTORE DISCIPLINE, AND IMPROVEMENTS RESULTED IMMEDIATELY.

4. AIR FORCE ACTIVITY IN ERITREA - FIVE F5'S DEPLOYED FROM HAME TO ASMARA EARLY IN OPERATION AND RETURNED ON FEBRUARY 1; ON FEBRUARY 2 AND 3 FEWER F5'S WERE DEPLOYED TO ASMARA IN MORNING AND RETURNED IN AFTERNOON; FIVE PLANES WERE DEPLOYED ON

FEBRUARY 4, A SOXTH LATER DEPLOYED, AND ALL RETURNED TO HAME ON FEBRUARY 8. THREE F5A'S SEEN IN ASMARA FEBRUARY 11. DETAILS ON OPERATION USE OF AIRCRAFT UNKNOWN. LACK OF SOOT ON PYLONS, ETC. INDICATE THAT NO BOMBS WERE DROPPED BY F5'S. SHORTAGE OF LAU-3 LAUNCHERS FOR F5A TENDS TO RULE OUT USE OF ROCKETS. ONE F86 WAS LOST DURING OPERATIONS; PILOT EJECTED SAFELY. THE T28D WAS USED IN THE OPERATION; DETAILED INFORMATION THEREON UNKNOWN.

ONE RT33 WAS COMMITTED TO RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS AND DECLARED MISSING IN FIRST FLIGHT. THIS LEAVES AF WITH ONE QUALIFIED RT33 PILOT AND NO OPERATIONAL AIRCRAFT (ONE DAMAGED, NEEDS RECON NOSE). WORK IS BEING PUSHED TO INSTALL CAMERAS IN A DOVE (BRITISH TWIN-ENGINE AIRCRAFT). SPEED AND ALTITUDE CONSTRAINTS WILL RESTRICT IT TO PERMISSIVE ENVIRONMENTS. AF IS SUPPORTING NAVY WITH SURVEILLANCE OVER RED SEA.

TWO OF FOUR CANBERRAS ARE OPERATIONAL. THEY ACTIVELY SUPPORTED GOVERNMENT FORCES IN ERITREA DURING WEEK OF FEBRUARY 2. MISSIONS WERE FLOWN NON-STOP FROM HAME; NO BOMBS WERE OBSERVED BEING LOADED; EACH AIRCRAFT APPEARED TO CARRY TWO FRENCH MARTA TYPE-55 ROCKET LAUNCHERS. IT IS BELIEVED THAT MISSIONS WERE AGAINST PRE-BRIEFED TARGETS AND NOT IN CLOSE SUPPORT OF GROUND FORCES.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 SAM-01

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AIR TRANSPORT SUPPORT DURING WEEK OF FEBRUARY 2 WAS EXCLUSIVELY C119K (NO C47'S). AVERAGE IN-COMMISSION RATE INCREASED FROM TWO TO FIVE OR SIX PER DAY DURING WEEK; HOWEVER, AVAILBLE AIRCRAFT COMMANDERS ONLY TOTALED FOUR.

5. NAVY ACTIVITY IN ERITREA - THE ENTIRE NAVY IS LOCATED IN ERITREA. DURING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 2 IT HAD FOLLOWING VESSELS OPERATIONAL; HMS ETHIOPIA, MS41, 4 PC, 4 GUNBOATS AND 3 LCM. DURING PAST WEEK THERE WAS EXTENSIVE UNDERWAY ACTIVITY BY ALL VESSELS. STARTING FEBRUARY 8 ALL OPERATIONAL SHIPS HAVE REMAINED AT SEA, RETURNING TO PORT ONLY FOR LOGISTICS. MOD HAS CONFIRMED THAT VESSELS ARE CONDUCTING COUNTER-INFILTRATION AND COASTAL DEFENSE PATROLS. THE NAVAL HEADQUARTERS PERSONNEL IN DOWNTOWN ASMARA SHOWED POOR DISCIPLINE AND COMMAND AND CONTROL DURING DEFENSE ACTIVITIES THERE. THEY FIRED PROMISCUOUSLY AND SHOWED A LACK OF RESPECT FOR CITIZENRY.

6. ARMY LOGISTIC SUPPORT - PRIOR TO ERITREAN OPERATION, ARMY LOGISTIC BASE WAS CONSIDERED ONLY 40-50 PERCENT CAPABLE OF MEETING ARMY SUPPLY AND MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS IN CASE OF

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A NEAR STATIC SITUATION IN ERITREA AND SUSTAINED HOSTILITIES IN THE OGADEN. IT CANNOT SUPPORT SUSTAINED OPERATIONS IN BOTH AREAS WITH ANY SEMBLANCE OF EFFECTIVENESS. CONTINUED OPERATIONS IN ERITREA WILL PROBABLY RESULT IN A DECREASE IN THE FREQUENCY OF SUPPLY CONVOYS TO THE OGADEN FROM EVERY 4-6 WEEKS TO POSSIBLY EVERY 10-14 WEEKS. POL SUPPLY IN ERITREA IS DEPENDENT ON OVERLAND ROUTES, WHICH HAVE BEEN INTERMITTENTLY INTERDICITED BY ELF/PLF. WE UNDERSTAND FOUR POL TRUCKS DID ENTER ASMARA FROM MASSAWA ON FEBURARY 10. EXCEPT FOR ALL MORTAR (10-13 DAYS) AND 105 MM ARTILLERY (10 DAYS), THE ARMY, THROUGH HOARDING OF TRAINING AMMUNITION, STARTED THE ERITREAN OPERATION WITH ABOUT 30 DAYS WR OF AMMUNITION. ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION IS 150 DAYS OF 7.62 MM AMMUNITION IN COUNTRY BECAUSE OF HOARDING AND INTRODUCTION OF AMMUNITION FOR WEAPONS NOT YET DELIVERED. NO DATA ON AMMUNITION EXPENDITURES IS YET AVAILABLE.

7. AIR FORCE LOGISTIC SUPPORT - UNCONFIRMED REPORTS INDICATE THAT A NUMBER OF AIR FORCE TECHNICIANS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED. THIS COULD BECOME GOVERNING CONSTRAINT ON AF LOGISTIC CAPABILITY. SPARE PARTS STOCKAGE SHOULD REMAIN ADEQUATE FOR INCREASED LEVEL OF OPERATIONS IF MAC FLIGHTS CONTINUE CURRENT SCHEDULES SO MAP ITEMS (NORS) CAN BE BROUGHT IN. STORAGE CAPACITY FOR POL IS ADEQUATE AT HAME AFB, ASMARA AND DIRE DAWA. A MILIMTED CAPACITY EXISTS AT GODI. ALL

BASES ARE DEPENDENT ON OVERLAND TRANSPORTATION FOR POL RESUPPLY
WITH ALL JP4 COMING FROM REFINERY AT ASSAB. ELF/PLF HAVE
RECENTLY INTERDICITED BOTH THE ASSAB -- HAME AND MASSAWA --
ASMARA ROUTES AND DO SO IN FUTURE.

THERE WAS ABOUT A 30-DAY WR OF AF AMMUNITION BEFORE
ERITREAN OPERATION EXCEPT THAT 20 MM API WAS AT 0 DAYS IN
ABSENCE OF FMS CASE THEREFOR. TWENTY-FIVE-35 PERCENT OF
THIS AMMUNITION WAS LOCATED IN ASMARA. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 24-25

DAY WR LEVEL REMAINS IN COUNTRY WITH POSSIBLE LOWER LEVELS FOR
250-POUND MK81 AND 260-POUND ANM BOMBS.

8. NAVY LOGISTIC SUPPORT - REPAIR PARTS AND READY WR AMMUNITION
ARE STOCKED AT MASSAWA NAVAL BASE.

FUEL IS READILY AVAILABLE FROM MASSAWA STORAGE FACILITIES.
STOCKAGE LEVEL OF CONSUMABLES (PARTICULARLY FOOD) ARE BELIEVED
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LOW AND COULD BECOME CRITICAL IF ASMARA-MASSAWA ROAD WERE CUT FOR
A MATTER OF DAYS AND MASSAWA AIRFIELD DENIED. WE UNDERSTAND FOOD
WAS LIFTED INTO MASSAWA BY AIR ON FEBRUARY 11.

BULK OF WR AMMUNITION STORED AT EMBATACALLA AND THUS AVAILABLE
OVERLAND ONLY IF ASMARA-MASSAWA ROAD IS OPEN
HISTORICALLY, DUE TO COMPETING REQUIREMENTS FOR RESOURCES,
WR LEVELS OF NAVY HAVE BEEN LOW. PRIOR TO ERITREAN OPERATION,
DURING WHICH IT IS BELIEVED NAVY EXPENDED SMALL AMOUNTS OF 40 MM
AND SMALLER MUNITIONS, THE FOLLOWING LEVELS ACCRUED:

- (1) 5"/38 CAL. - 30 PERCENT
- (2) 40 MM - 35 PERCENT
- (3) 20 MM - 25 PERCENT
- (4) 50 CAL. - 100 PERCENT
- (5) SMALL ARMS - UNKNOWN

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